

**In the Claims:**

**Please amend the claims to read as follows:**

1. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus comprising:  
one or more image carrier or carriers carrying toner;  
one or more transfer means, each transfer means having a surface that rotates  
and comes in contact with one of the image carrier or carriers at an upstream  
end of a first nip or nips, for causing one or more toner image or images formed  
on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to be electrostatically relocated  
onto one or more sheet or sheets of paper passing through said first nip or nips;  
and  
one or more paper transport means disposed upstream in one or more transport  
directions relative to at least one of the first nip or nips and comprising one or  
more pair or pairs of pressure rollers holding one or more lead edge portion or  
portions of at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper in one or more second nip  
or nips formed therebetween and rotating so as to cause transport of same;  
wherein  
at least one of the paper transport means being is disposed to the side, on which at  
least one of the image carrier or carriers is present, of a plane more or less  
tangent to at least one of the first nip or nips formed between at least one of the  
image carrier or carriers and at least one of the transfer means; ~~and~~  
~~the~~ one or more lead edge portion or portions of the at least one ~~of the~~ sheet or sheets of  
paper being is or are transported from at least one of the paper transport means,  
with one or more lead edge portion or portions of said sheet or sheets of paper  
being oriented along a trajectory toward at least one of the transfer means which  
is located on the opposite side of the plane therefrom, and  
at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs comprises one or more drive roller or  
rollers and one or more idler roller or rollers;  
at least one of the drive roller or rollers comprises at least one metal roller; and  
at least one of the idler roller or rollers comprises at least one electrically conductive  
elastic roller.

2. Cancelled, without prejudice.

3. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 2 1 wherein:  
at least one of the idler roller or rollers of at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs is  
driven by at least one of the drive roller or rollers.

4. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 2 1 wherein:  
one or more voltage or voltages opposite in polarity to at least one electrostatic potential  
or potentials of at least one of the image carrier or carriers is or are applied to at  
least one of the idler roller or rollers of at least one of the pressure roller pair or  
pairs.

5. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to any of claims ~~2 through 4~~ 1, 3  
or 4 wherein:  
an application of a voltage or voltages to at least one of the idler roller or rollers is or are  
timed relative to the holding of at least one of the lead edge portion or portions  
of at least one of the transported sheet or sheets of paper by at least one of the  
second nip or nips ~~nip~~ formed by at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs.

6. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 5 wherein:  
at least one length or lengths of at least one of the paper lead edge portion or portions at  
which said voltage or voltages is or are applied is not so long as to substantially  
affect information contained in at least one image or images formed on at least  
one of the image carrier or carriers.

7. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 4 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with ~~difference~~ a difference or differences in thickness attributable to a type or types of transported paper.
8. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 5 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with ~~difference~~ a difference or differences in thickness attributable to a type or types of transported paper.
9. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 6 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with ~~difference~~ a difference or differences in thickness attributable to a type or types of transported paper.
10. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.
11. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 8 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.

12. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim ~~2~~1 wherein:
  - at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.
13. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:
  - at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.
14. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 8 wherein:
  - at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.
15. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 10 wherein:
  - at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

16. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 11 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

17. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 16 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is approximately equal to at least one absolute value of at least one development bias voltage which when applied to at least one of the transfer means would cause at least one latent electrostatic image or images on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to become manifest.

18. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method for transporting one or more sheets of paper relative to one or more image forming means comprising one or more image carrier or carriers carrying toner and one or more transfer roll or rollers, each including a surface rotating and coming in contact with at least one of the image carrier or carriers at a first nip or nips for causing one or more toner image or images formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to be electrostatically relocated onto one or more sheets of paper; said paper transport method including the steps of:

- (i) providing one or more paper transport means disposed (a) upstream from an upstream end or ends of said first nip or nips in one or more transport direction or directions relative to at least one of the transfer means and (b) to the side, on which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is or are present, of a plane more or less tangent to the at least one first nip or nips formed between at least one of said image carrier or carriers and the surface of at least one of said transfer roller or rollers, said one or more paper transport means comprising one or more pair or pairs of oppositely rotating pressure rollers holding one or more leading edge portion or portions of at least one of said sheet or sheets of paper in one or more second nip or nips formed therebetween , wherein at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs comprises one or more drive roller or rollers and one or more idler roller or rollers, at least one of the drive roller or rollers comprises at least one metal roller; and at least one of the idler roller or rollers comprises at least one electrically conductive elastic roller; and
- (ii) transporting said leading edge portion or portions of said at least one sheet or sheets of paper from said at least one second nip or nips of the paper transport means with the one or more sheet or sheets of paper being oriented along a trajectory toward at least one of said transfer means which is located on the opposite ~~said-side~~ of said plane therefrom.

19. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method according to claim 18, wherein:

one or more voltage or voltages, that is or are timed in a prescribed fashion and opposite in polarity to at least one electrostatic potential or potentials applied to at least one of the image carrier or carriers, is or are applied to one or more of said pressure roller or rollers of said one or more paper transport means such that said one or more voltage or voltages is or are applied to only lead edge portion or portions of at least one of said sheet or sheets of paper transported to at least one of said image forming means.

20. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method according to claim 19 wherein:

at least one length or lengths of at least one of the paper lead edge portion or portions at which voltage or voltages is or are applied is not so long as to substantially affect information contained in at least one image or images formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers.

21. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method according to claim 20 wherein:

at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with a difference or differences in thickness attributable to a type or types of transported paper, being increased with increasing thickness or thicknesses of the paper.

22. (Original) A paper transport method according to any of claims 19 through 21 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

23. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method according to claim 22 wherein:  
at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is approximately  
equal to at least one absolute value of at least one development bias voltage  
which when applied to at least one of the transfer means would cause at least one  
latent electrostatic ~~image~~ image or images on at least one of the image carrier or  
carriers to become manifest.
24. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:  
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.
25. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:  
at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least  
one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image  
carrier or carriers is charged.